There is a controversy concerning the origin of the *kariz* which has a bearing on the ancient routes by which knowledge of various kinds was transmitted through Inner Asia into China and from China. Huntington asserted that the *kariz* was introduced into Sinkiang from Iran or Transcaspia, about 1780. Pelliot and Stein held almost the same view. On the other hand the eminent Chinese historian Wang Kuo-wei believes that it was first brought to Sinkiang from China after the opening up of the Western Regions in the Han Dynasty. These references do not exhaust the problem, for the *kariz* principle was used by the Greeks on Samos, and by the Etruscans in Italy in the sixth century B.C. In Central Arabia it is known as *saqi*, and in Morocco as *foggara*. Subterranean irrigation canals were also built by the Incas in Peru.

Springs and subterranean flows are supplementary sources of water in some oases. About 50 per cent of the water for irrigation in Komul comes from springs, as against 25 per cent each from *kariz* and rivers. In Kulja and several other large oases springs are used to irrigate rice fields, which require a very steady flow of water. In the miniature oasis of Kumish, south of Toksun, a spring with a discharge of only three cubic meters a day is the sole source of water for the irrigation of about eight acres of land. Closely related to springs are the streams which disappear in boulder fans and emerge again later in or beyond an oasis. The flow of such streams, which are called *sai*, is apt to be fluctuating; but except where they have been tapped by *kariz*, they are an important source of water which has not been fully utilized.

"Tanks" — as they are called in India — or small pits are used for the storage of drinking water in the towns of some oases, but not as reservoirs for irrigation water except in the dying oasis of Maralbashi. Most of the river water is taken off by oases lying upstream from Maralbashi, forcing the cultivators to store water when they can get it and keep it until they need to use it. Unfortunately the main reservoir has now silted up, so that unless a new one is dug the oasis will sooner or later have to be abandoned.